HANS WEHR

A DICTIONARY OF MODERN WRITTEN ARABIC

(Arabic - English)

Edited by

J MILTON COWAN

Fourth Edition

Considerably enlarged and amended by the author

SPOKEN LANGUAGE SERVICES, INC.

URBANA, IL

This dictionary is an enlarged and improved version of "Arabisches Wörterbuch für die Schriftsprache der Gegenwart" by Hans Wehr and includes the contents of the "Supplement zum Arabischen Wörterbuch für die Schriftsprache der Gegenwart" and a collection of new additional material (about 13,000 entries) by the same author.

Wehr, Hans:

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Preface to the Student Edition

This edition is intended to meet the demand of students & scholars for a compact, well-bound, economically priced version of A DICTIONARY OF MODERN WRITTEN ARABIC. It contains all of the entries of the larger, hard-bound, 4th edition.

Ithaca NY J MILTON COWAN
December 1993

Preface to the Fourth Edition

This edition of the Dictionary, published eighteen years after its first appearance, is an enlarged and improved version of the original corpus. During the past two decades, the Dictionary has achieved widespread acceptance and use. In the interim, modern written Arabic has continued to exhibit vigorous lexical growth. Therefore, feeling the need to fill in many gaps and update the corpus, the author again undertook systematic collection of material. In addition to many neologisms of recent origin, the author has incorporated much older material attested in present-day contexts, which had not yet appeared in the Dictionary, as well as numerous improvements and corrections. The result is that this revised edition has nearly 200 new pages.

All new entries have been derived from primary sources, i.e. from running contexts. The source texts, predominantly from the last ten years, cover a broad spectrum of content, style and origin, thereby providing a representative cross section of modern usage encountered in various fields such as technology, economics, sports, medicine, the oil industry and the natural sciences, as well as creative literature. Particular use was made of texts from Egypt, Syria, Lebanon and Saudi Arabia which were drawn from newspapers, periodicals, textbooks, official and private documents and belles-lettres; some use was also made of the press of the north-west African countries. —The number of new entries, including lemmata as well as compounds, idiomatic phrases and new definitions of head words, runs to approximately 13.000. Moreover, in ca. 3.000 instances, smaller additions (new transcriptions, plural forms, prepositional government of verbs, cross-references, etc.) have been inserted, errors corrected, obsolete entries eliminated. Some lemmata have been completely reworked.

The revised edition suffers from a technical limitation. For economic reasons, it was done by cutting and pasting-in of the new material rather than by new typesetting of the entire book. In order to keep the number of places requiring change within reason, no attempt was made to follow through consistently with all possible changes in presentation and arrangement. Insertions into longer lemmata and changes of order which would have required extensive new composition were avoided where they were not absolutely necessary. The user is asked to overlook certain inconsistencies in the ordering of sequences after the bold-faced colons. The mark (') indicating the glottal stop in the transcription should appear before initial vowels, wherever *hamzat al-qaṭʿ* would be written in voweled Arabic script or where

madda occurs; thus one should read, for example: *'amr, 'umm, 'irād, 'ādāb* instead of *amr, umm, īrād, ādāb*, since the glottal stop is a separate phoneme, also in initial position.—The "Introduction" remains essentially unchanged. The user is urged to become familiar with the principles on which the presentation of the contents is based and to study the explanations for use of the Dictionary at the end of the "Introduction"(pp. XII—XV) before attempting to use it.

My special thanks are due to the Editor, J Milton Cowan, who converted the new material from German into English. I am greatly indebted to Dr. Lorenz Kropfitsch, who worked a year with me in Münster and helped me prepare printer's copy. He also contributed some 600 entries, mainly from the newspapers of the Maghreb, and undertook the time-consuming revision of the cut-and-pasted page proof. I should like to express my gratitude to Dr. Karl Stowasser, who read galley proofs of the new composition and provided excellent contributions to the English translation as well as numerous valuable notes and suggestions. Some hundreds of additions came from the late Dr. Fahmi Abul-Fadl, whose premature death I deeply regret. Also, I am grateful for contributions of entries from Mr. Alex Sheffy of Jerusalem and from Dr. Mokhtar Ahmed, who came from Egypt and was my main informant. Furthermore, Dr. Omar Al Sasi of Saudi Arabia and students at our University from several Arab countries served as informants from time to time. Several colleagues submitted smaller numbers of entries and supplied information. To all those who contributed to the revision, and, last but not least, to the publisher who supported the work in various ways, I express my heartfelt thanks.

Münster
July 1979

HANS WEHR

Preface to the First Edition

Shortly after the publication of Professor Hans Wehr's *Arabisches Wörterbuch für die Schriftsprache der Gegenwart* in 1952, the Committee on Language Programs of the American Council of Learned Societies recognized its excellence and began to explore means of providing an up-to-date English edition. Professor Wehr and I readily reached agreement on a plan to translate, edit, and enlarge the dictionary. This task was considerably lightened and hastened by generous financial support from the American Council of Learned Societies, the Arabian American Oil Company, and Cornell University.

This dictionary will be welcome not only to English and American users, but to orientalists throughout the world who are more at home with English than with German. It is more accurate and much more comprehensive than the original version, which was produced under extremely unfavorable conditions in Germany during the late war years and the early postwar period.

Ithaca, New York
November 1960

J MILTON COWAN

Introduction

This dictionary presents the vocabulary and phraseology of modern written Arabic. It is based on the form of the language which, throughout the Arab world from Iraq to Morocco, is found in the prose of books, newspapers, periodicals, and letters. This form is also employed in formal public address, over radio and television, and in religious ceremonial. The dictionary will be most useful to those working with writings that have appeared since the turn of the century.

The morphology and syntax of written Arabic are essentially the same in all Arab countries. Vocabulary differences are limited mainly to the domain of specialized vocabulary. Thus the written language continues, as it has done throughout centuries of the past, to ensure the linguistic unity of the Arab world. It provides a medium of communication over the vast geographical area whose numerous and widely diverse local dialects it transcends. Indeed, it gives the Arab people of many countries a sense of identity and an awareness of their common cultural heritage.

Two powerful and conflicting forces have affected the development of the modern Arabic lexicon. A reform movement originating toward the end of the last century in Syria and Lebanon has reawakened and popularized the old conviction of educated Arabs that the ancient *'arabiya* of pre-Islamic times, which became the classical form of the language in the early centuries of Islam, is better and more correct than any later form. Proponents of this puristic doctrine have held that new vocabulary must be derived exclusively in accordance with ancient models or by semantic extension of older forms. They have insisted on the replacement of all foreign loanwords with purely Arabic forms and expressions. The purists have had considerable influence on the development of modern literary Arabic although there has been widespread protest against their extreme point of view. At the same time and under the increasing influence of Western civilization, Arab writers and journalists have had to deal with a host of new concepts and ideas previously alien to the Arab way of life. As actual usage demonstrates, the purists have been unable to cope with the sheer bulk of new linguistic material which has had to be incorporated into the language to make it current with advances in world knowledge. The result is seen in the tendency of many writers, especially in the fields of science and technology, simply to adopt foreign words from the European languages. Many common, everyday expressions from the various colloquial dialects have also found their way into written expression.

From its inception, this dictionary has been compiled on scientific descriptive principles. It contains only words and expressions which were found in context during the course of wide reading in literature of every kind or which, on the basis of other evidence, can be shown to be unquestionably a part of the present-day vocabulary. It is a faithful record of the language as attested by usage rather than a normative presentation of what theoretically ought to occur. Consequently, it not only lists classical words and phrases of elegant rhetorical style side by side with new coinages that conform to the demands of the purists, but it also contains neologisms, loan translations, foreign loans, and colloquialisms which may not be to the linguistic taste of many educated Arabs. But since they occur in the corpus of materials on which the dictionary is based, they are included here.